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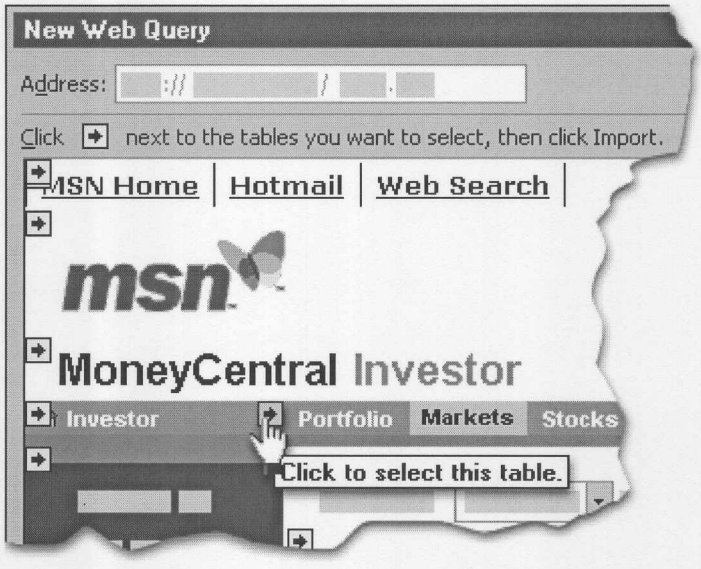
# Getting data from the Web in Excel

Assistance > Office XP > Excel 2002 > Workbooks and Worksheets

**Applies to**

Microsoft Excel 2002

Web queries can assist you in inserting refreshable data from the Web into your worksheets. Web queries available in earlier versions of Microsoft Excel, but have been greatly improved. You can now navigate to a page while setting up a Web query, the same way as you would navigate to that page in your browser. Or are at the page, you can select one or more tables by clicking the icon images automatically added to the Excel.




## Learn the basics of Web queries

A great way to learn the basics of Web queries is to look at one of the sample queries included with Excel.

### Using a sample Web query

The MSN® Money Central™ Investor Stock Quotes Web query included with Excel lets you insert the lates quotes into your spreadsheets. Just use the **Import Data** command (**Data** menu, **Import External Dat** select **MSN MoneyCentral Stock Quotes** as your data source. For the parameter value, use the symbol stock you're interested in. (For example, to get Microsoft stock quotes, you would type MSFT.) After you c query, you can refresh its value at any time to get a new quote.

### Creating your own Web query

Now that you have an idea of how Web queries work, you can easily create your own Web queries. Howe good idea to have in mind the Web page from which you want to get data and the address of that page, t begin creating the Web query.

## Ways to create a Web query in Excel

There are several different ways to create a Web query in Excel.

### Using the Import Data command

The traditional method of creating a web query uses the **New Web Query** menu command found on the menu under **Import External Data**. If you want to insert one of the sample Web queries that comes wit or if you want to insert one of your own previously saved Web queries, you can use the **Import Data** cor (**Data** menu, **Import External Data**).

### Using Copy and Paste

Another method of creating a Web query is to start with the Web page open in Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher). You can then copy the tabular data that you want to import, and paste it into your Excel w When you paste the data in Excel, use the **Paste Options** button to select the **Create Refreshable We** option.

For more information on the **Paste Options** button and other Smart Tags, see Complete Tasks Quickly w Tags in Office XP.

### Within Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer (version 5.0 or higher) includes two ways for you to create a Web query in Excel from w Internet Explorer. These methods are described below.

**Using the shortcut menu** You can now export tabular data that you find on a Web page to Excel using shortcut menu. Right-click on the data and choose **Export to Microsoft Excel**. This feature allows you t process of creating a Web query right from within Internet Explorer.

**Using the Edit button** Another way to get tabular data from a Web page into an Excel workbook is to u **Edit** button in Internet Explorer. This button includes Excel as a valid editor for all Web pages. When you that you would like to export to Excel, click the down arrow next to the Edit button and click **Edit with M Excel**.

## Updating the data

A Web query can be refreshed manually (**External Data** toolbar, **Refresh Data**), or you can have it autc refresh. Using this feature allows you to make sure that your spreadsheets contain the most up-to-date ar accurate information.

## Changing a Web query

You can change the type of data or formatting that your query returns by editing the query. Click a cell wi queried data and then click **Edit Query** on the **External Data** toolbar.

## Using Web query with XML sources

Excel supports both reading and writing of XML. Complimenting this feature is the ability to create Web qu XML files. You can create a Web query to any XML, but if you use the XML Spreadsheet schema, then you preserve rich spreadsheet concepts like formulas. When you use a Web query to get data from an XML file need to select **Full HTML formatting** in the **Web Query Options**.

**Note** When creating a Web query to an XML file, Excel uses the first processing instruction available, if th one. If no processing instructions are included, Excel determines whether the proper schema is XML Sprea MSPersist, or neither. Excel will process the file according to the appropriate schema, or if the file is not in those schemas, Excel will process the files using generic XML Flattening code. Excel saves XML files in its c Spreadsheet Schema, and this is the only available format for saving XML in Excel.

## Using Web query redirections

When you create a Web query to a specific table on a Web page, Excel looks for the presence of a custom tag called o:WebQuerySourceHRef. If this attribute is present, it means that the author of the Web page understands that people will want to create Web queries to that page and has designed a special version c table that is accessed via another Web address. The advantage is that the users of the Web query think th connecting to nicely formatted HTML tables, but they are actually getting rich and accurate XML Spreadsh versions of the data.

An example of a Web query redirection in Microsoft Office XP is lists posted on a Web site based on Share Team Services from Microsoft. If you have set up a SharePoint team Web site and you have created a list Web site, you can create a Web query to the list and Excel will use the redirection to connect to the under source.

## Finding more information on Web queries

The online Help in Excel includes complete task-based and conceptual help topics about Web queries. For information on Web queries, see Microsoft Excel Help.

## Troubleshooting and Limitations

### No formatting imported

The default for a new Web query is to bring in no formatting (just plain text). This is because some HTML

formatting will prevent subsequent analysis in Excel. For example, merged cells are a common type of HTI formatting, but merged cells will prevent PivotTable® reports and charts from working correctly. To prese formatting, choose **Rich text formatting only** or **Full HTML formatting** from the **Web Query Optior** box, accessed via the **Options** button on the **Edit Web Query** dialog box.

**The data is incorrectly displayed as dates**

Excel automatically tries to interpret dates when data is imported. For example, 03-06 is converted to Mar You can turn off Excel's automatic date recognition in the **Web Query Options** dialog box, accessed via t **Options** button on the **Edit Web Query** dialog box.

**No data is returned from a security-enhanced site (sites where login is required)**

Excel will not support getting data from security-enhanced Web sites that do not use Microsoft Windows N security. A common example of this would be a bank's Web site that allows you to view your personal acc information.

**No data, or the wrong data, is returned**

There are several possible reasons why data cannot be successfully imported into Excel:

- Make sure that you are connected to your Intranet or to the Internet when you are creating or refresh query.
- Some pages use script to generate or populate tables with data. Excel Web queries do not support the of Web pages. The **Web Query** dialog box uses the Windows Web Browsing Component to display th page so that you can select the data you want. In this dialog box, any script or data binding occurs se However, Excel does not use this component when retrieving the data from the site for initial importin subsequent refreshes. The only information that Excel has access to is the raw HTML source text, with benefit of reprocessing any scripts or data binding prior to extracting the data. Unfortunately, if neithe your company has control over the Web page, there is no workaround for this limitation. However, if y the content of the Web page you can use redirection as discussed above.

**No icons show up on some tables on frameset pages**

When you are viewing, in the **Web Query** dialog box, a Web page that uses frames, sometimes table sele icons won't be displayed. Clicking the **Refresh** button in this case may fix the problem, but often this caus frameset to navigate back to the main page. To see the table icons, click the **Hide Icons** button twice to table icons.

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Pri

# Excel Web Query Secrets Revealed

**Special Report**
*- Jon Wittwer*
*Vertex42, LLC*

***Excel Web Query*** - What in the world is that? If you are like the other **99.** of MS Excel users, you probably have **never heard of microsoft excel we queries** (note: statistic made up). I only discovered them this past year, ar thought I was an Excel expert!

**Excel web queries are powerful**! Perhaps TOO powerful! Web queries are basically like having a browser built into Excel, which strips web pages of us stuff and gives you **access to the essential information**. You can then us **formulas** (like =A1/B2) to work directly with the data you've downloaded. / don't have to know a lick about perl, cgi, php, javascript, and so on and so f

To the normal every-day Excel user, a web query is nothing more than a co But to **creative-minded** Excel users, with some HTML knowledge behind th queries can lead to a **drastic increase in productivity**.

## Getting Started with Sample Excel Web Queries

To get started, take a jog over to Microsoft's page that explains the basics o queries: "Getting Data From the Web In Excel".

The example web queries that come with Excel are usually for **importing st quote data** into Excel. For rapidly changing data like stock quotes, the web can be set to automatically refresh every 5,7,21,40,... minutes.

Although importing stock quotes into Excel happened to be the reason I can Excel web queries, I have since found many other ways to use them.

It is not necessarily the web query itself that is **THE big secret** that this art about. Instead, it's the ability to make a **DYNAMIC Web Query**!

By **dynamic**, I'm **not** talking about using "refresh" to update the data. Wha is the **ability to change the parameters of the web query**, such as typi **new** stock symbol into a cell and having the table update automatically.

It's like having an **web form embedded inside of Excel**.

If you find yourself using the internet to gather data and find yourself using same tool or form over and over, **an excel web query might be the solut your monotonous woes**. It's not always going to be better, and it's not al

going to work, but it's worth a try, especially since a simple web query coulc drastically boost your productivity!

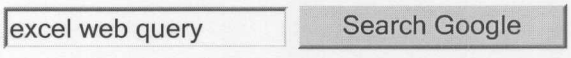
## Excel Web Query ".iqy" Files

The real key to creating a **dynamic** excel web query is to work directly with file. In it's basic form, the ".iqy" file is simply a TEXT file with three main lin

```
WEB
1
http://www.thedomain.com/script.pl?paramname=value&param2=v
```

**You can create the file using a simple text editor!** You don't even need what the first two lines are for. I knew once, but I've forgotten. I just keep them there out of habit.

The second line is the important one! It's simply the **URL**. Notice that is con **two parameters**. If you don't know what parameters are for, just browse t for a while and *pay attention to what shows up in the address bar of your br* Go to Google.com for instance, and look up "excel web query".




Parameter **name** / **value** pairs are listed after the "**?**" in the URL and are se by an "**&**".

## Make the Web Query Dynamic

**You won't believe how easy this is going to be!**

Simply replace the **value** of each parameter in the web query file (querynar with:

```
["paramname","Enter the blah blah here:"]
```

Want to see how this would apply to a Google search? The form that I used consists of HTML code that looks like this:

```
<form action="http://www.google.com/search">
<input type="text" name="q" value="excel web query">
<input type="submit" value="Search Google">
</form>
```

Notice that "**q**" is the name of the parameter, and the **action** tells you what should be. The **dynamic web query** file for a simple google search would l this:

```
WEB
1
http://www.google.com/search?q=["keyword","Enter the Search
Term:"]
```

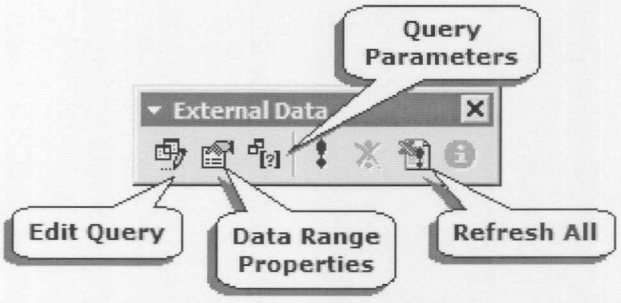
## Let's Create a Web Query

1. Open up a text editor and copy the Google example. **Save the file as GoogleSearch.iqy**

2. Open up Excel and enter a search term in Cell **B3**

3. Open the web query file you just saved (GoogleSearch.iqy)
   Excel 2000: Go to Data --> Get External Data --> Run Saved Query.
   Excel XP: Go to Data --> Import External Data --> Import Data ...

4. When prompted for the search term, enter: **=B3**
   If that doesn't work right off, you can edit your web query later, usin
   External Data Toolbar (Tools --> Customize ...)




**Play around with the web query options and properties** (using the Ext Data Toolbar). You will find that you need to select a cell inside of the web c before you can click on the toolbar buttons.

For the Google Search example, try selecting just the portion of the page th how many sites matched your search. If you need a little help, or are just la **here**.

When you have the query looking just the way you want it, **save the Excel query** (an icon or button for saving the web query is in the "Edit Query" wir When you save the new query, your ".iqy" file will include the options you h selected.

**Another Example:**

Want to try another interesting web query? How about a link to Overture's k suggestion tool? It tells you the popularity of various keywords (in terms of per month). Click Here for the IQY File.

After a little formatting, you can do some fun stuff with the query. The follo
is an example Excel spreadsheet (.xls file) containing the dynamic web quer
Overture Keyword Suggestion Tool Example

## Become a Web Query Wiz

Granted, web queries are obviously not the solution to every problem, but w
DO work, it sure is great fun!

Take a few minutes to think about what **mundane or repetitive tasks** YOU
the internet, particularly cases where you go to the same sites over and ove
out the same on-line form again and again. If you find yourself **copying an
pasting** or **re-typing** information into Excel so that you can **perform calcu
with the data, you may have found an ideal use for an excel web query.

There are two main things that you need in order to become a **Web Query**

1. ***A working knowledge of Excel formulas***. By this, I mean the abilit
text-manipulation and other formulas. A **GREAT book for both learn
reference** (and the one that I use all the time) is *John Walkenbach's
Formulas"*. **Go get it now!** If you are an avid Excel user, it will probal
the best investment you will make for a long time! The only problem I
with the book is that I need TWO copies - one for work and one for ho

2. ***A working knowledge of HTML***. This is the hard part unless you are
designer or programmer. The articles listed in the side bar will help to
extent, but ultimately this issue was the reason why I didn't write a m
detailed tutorial. Something that will be a great help is to learn about
**<form>** tags work. Here is my favorite reference.

If you are an Excel enthusiast and want to learn to become a web query wiz
the articles and read the books. In the process, you will find that **people co
YOU to ask questions about Excel**.

## Web Query Solutions for Webmasters

**If you have developed a free on-line tool** (particularly tools which displa
of information or statistics), then you may or may not want people to use w
queries to access it.

Please **click here** for more information.

## Share the Joy

**Everybody likes a good Excel tip now and then.**

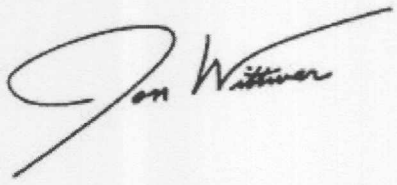
Do you have friends or work associates that use Excel? (*Who doesn't?*) Why
them a link to this page, and share your new-found Excel skills.

**Click here to get your email started.**

If this "mailto:" link doesn't work for you, copy and paste the following link i email:

http://www.vertex42.com/Links/go.php?urlid=wq_article

Happy Excelling!



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**CITE THIS ARTICLE AS:**

Wittwer, J.W., "Excel Web Query Secrets Revealed" From *Vertex42.com*, 2003, http://www.vertex42.com/News/excel-web-query.html